

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PALERM 00366 01 OF 02 231741Z

ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2087

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PALERMO 00366

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJ: PALERMO DC PROVINCIAL CONGRESS

1. SUMMARY: MAY 14-15 DC PALERMO PROVINCIAL CONGRESS UNANIMOUSLY ACCEPTED NOTION OF DC-PCI "CONFRONTO", THOUGH POLICY NUANCES REMAIN ONLY ON HOW "CONFRONTO" IS PURSUED. RESULTS ALSO CONFIRMED DOWNWARD SLIDE OF GIOVANNI GIOIA'S INFLUENCE OVER LOCAL DC. GIOIA'S FORMER BOSS RULE GAVE WAY TO "COLLEGIAL" LEADERSHIP WITH SALVO LIMA (ANDREOTTIANO) AS FIRST AMONG PEERS. AVOWED GOAL OF CONGRESS DELEGATES WAS DC UNITY TO MAKE PARTY STRONG ENOUGH TO BARGAIN EFFECTIVELY WITH PCI. CONGRESS EPILOGUE MAY BE RESHUFFLING OF POSITIONS AT PALERMO PROVINCIAL AND CITY LEVELS, AND IN SICILIAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT. RESULTS COULD ALSO STRENGTHEN NATIONAL POSITION OF PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER GULLOTTI. END OF SUMMARY

2. THE MAY 14-15 DC PALERMO PROVINCIAL CONGRESS OFFERED FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO MEASURE THE FORMAL EFFECT OF TWO MAJOR RECENT DC DEVELOPMENTS: (1) A SPLIT IN THE ONCE-DOMINANT FANFANI FOLLOWING OF GIOVANNI GIOIA, AND (2) THE IMPACT ON THE PARTY OF "CONFRONTO" WITH THE PCI AS IT HAS BEEN PURSUED BY ALL IN THE LOCAL PARTY BUT GIOIA.

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PAGE 02 PALERM 00366 01 OF 02 231741Z

3. UNTIL LAST YEAR, GIOIA'S CONTROL OF LOCAL POLITICS AND HIS ANATHHEMA AGAINST THE COMMUNISTS (EXTENDED FOR GOOD MEASURE TO THEPSI) REMAINED ALMOST ABSOLUTE. THE COALESCENCE, HOWEVER, SINCE THE DC'S LAST PROVINCIAL CONGRESS (1974), OF AN ANTI-GIOIA COALITION WHICH ENCOMPASSED EVERY OTHER PARTY FACTION BROUGHT WITH IT A MORE "POSSIBILIST" LINE TOWARD THE PCI AND WITH IT NEW PALERMO

PROVINCIAL AND CITY ADMINISTRATIONS BASED ON DC-PCI PROGRAM AGREEMENTS ("CONFRONTO"). ANTI-GIOIA OPERATION WAS ORCHESTRATED BY SALVO LIMA, PREVIOUSLY ONE OF GIOIA'S CLOSEST COLLABORATORS, AND NOW ANDREOTTI'S MAN IN WESTERN SICILY. THE ANDREOTTI CONNECTION HELPED LIMA BUILD LOCAL POWER THROUGH PATRONAGE; WHILE IMPROVED DC-PCI CLIMATE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL MADE OF GIOIA'S FIERCE ANTAGONISM TOWARD THE COMMUNISTS AT LOCAL LEVEL SOMETHING OF AN IDEOLOGICAL ANTIQUE. LIMA'S OPENING TOWARD THE PCI ALSO BROUGHT HIM ADDED FRINGE BENEFIT OF A MARKED CHANGE IN THE TENOR OF PCI PARTY'S PROPAGANDA ATTACKS AGAINST HIM FOR HIS ALLEGED CONNIVANCE WITH THE MAFIA. PCI NOW PORTRAYS LIMA AS A STATESMAN OF "ACUTE POLITIHAL DISCERNMENT".

4. IN HIS CONGRESS REMARKS, LIMA SOUGHT (AND RECEIVED) BROAD PARTY BACKING FOR CONTINUING CLOSER DC-PCI RELATIONSHIPS WHICH HE TERMED A STATEOF NECESSITY, AND THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE TO A PROBABLY-FATAL CLASH BETWEEN ITALY'S TWO MAJOR PARTIES. CONGRESS DELEGATES AGREED WITH LIMA'S THESIS AND STRESSED PARTY UNITY AS AN ESSENTIAL PRE-CONDITION FOR SUCCESSFUL MANAGEMENT OF THE DC-PCI RELATIONSHIP. EVEN GIOIA STRUCK THIS THEME THOUGH HE CHIDED LIMA FOR GOING TOO FAR IN REAL DEALINGS WITH THE PCI.

BASED ON NEW-FOUND, IF FRAGILE, UNITARY FOUNDATION, POLICY SET BY THE CONGRESS FEATURE UNANIMOUS APPROVAL OF "PROGRAMMATIC AGREEMENTS" WITH THE PCI THOUGH THERE WERE REMINDERS THAT THESE SHOULD NOT GO BEYOND THE PARAMETERS SET BY THE DC NATIONAL CONGRESS.

5. FACTIONAL ALIGNMENTS IN THE NEW 42-MAN DC PROVINCIAL COMMITTEE ARE
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PAGE 03 PALERM 00366 01 OF 02 231741Z

- LIMA (ANDREOTTI) NICOLETTI (FORZE NUOVE) FASINO
(GULLOTTI) 18 SEATS

- GIOIA (FANFANI) 7 SEATS

- CIANCIMINO (AUTONOMOUS) 7 SEATS

- RUFFINI (PICCOLP-BISAGLIA) 5 SEATS

- MATTARELLA (MOROTEO) 5 SEATS

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PAGE 01 PALERM 00366 02 OF 02 231742Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PALERMO 0366

FACTIONAL STRENGTHS, EVEN THOUGH A COMMON LINE HAS BEEN AGREED, LEAVE NO ONE IN THE DOMINANT POWER POSITION ENJOYED PREVIOUSLY BY GIOIA, THOUGH LIMA IS CLEARLY PALERMO'S CURRENT "PEZZO DA NOVANTA". RE-ELECTION OF HIS MAN, MICHELE REINA, AS DC PROVINCIAL SECRETARY IS CONSIDERED A FOREGONE CONCLUSION.

6. COMMENT: GIVEN THE PROMINENCE OF THE PALERMO DC AND OF THE ABOVE PLAYERS IN THE ISLAND'S POLITICS, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT FORMAL APPROVAL OF PREVIOUSLY EMERGING POLICY AND PERSONALITY PATTERNS WILL LEAD TO RESHUFFLING AT THE LOCAL CITY AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT LEVELS AND PERHAPS ALSO IN THE SICILIAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT. THE FANFANIANI WANT TO MOVE BACK INTO THE PALERMO CITY AND PROVINCIAL GIUNTAS AND OTHERS WILL HAVE TO MOVE OVER TO MAKE ROOM. ALL FACTIONS AND PARTIES ARE THUS DEMANDING A COMPLETE RENEGOTIATION OF GOVERNMENT AND SOTTOGOVERNO ASSIGNMENTS. WITH THE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION ALREADY DECLARED ILLEGAL BY THE REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL AND THE CURRENT CITY GIUNTA IN A WOBBLY STATE, CHANGES CAN BE EXPECTED IN BOTH INSTITUTIONS. THE PENDING APPOINTMENT OF A NEW PRESIDENT OF THE BANK OF SICILY (PROMISED TO THE FANFANIANI WHEN THEY WERE STRONGER) AND THE RUMORED EARLY RETIREMENT PLANS OF REGIONAL PRESIDENT ANGELO BONFIGLIO, WHO RECENTLY UNDERWENT BRAIN SURGERY, WILL ALSO PROMPT CONSIDERABLE JOCKEYING BY PEOPLE AND PARTIES. OF POSSIBLE SIGNIFICANCE NATIONALLY, IS FACT THAT PALERMO
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PAGE 02 PALERM 00366 02 OF 02 231742Z

RESULTS CLEARLY STRENGTHEN HAND OF PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER NINO GULLOTTI, WHO HAS BEEN SICILY'S MOST PROMINENT SICILIAN NATIONAL DC FIGURE TO FAVOR CLOSER DC-PCI RELATIONS IN THE ISLAND. A STRENGTHENED POWER BASE AT HOME WOULD PERMIT GULLOTTI TO EXERT GREATER INFLUENCE IN HIS OWN PARTY FACTION, WHICH REMAINS SOMEWHAT FLUID FOLLOWING THE ECLIPSE OF MARIANO RUMOR.
COLLINS

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